

REMARKS

The claims were amended in accordance with the amendments above. The amendments are being made to clarify the invention and to focus the claims on those aspects of the invention which are a commercial priority to the assignee. The amendments are fully supported by the specification, claims, and figures as originally filed. No new matter is believed or intended to be involved.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview with the Examiner on 07/14/2005. The claims were amended as discussed in the interview. While no agreement was reached, Applicants believe that the present claims are in a condition for entry and allowance.

As discussed in the interview, each of the independent claims (claims 13, 27, and 40) were amended to recite that a computer system is used to perform the act of formatting the customer billing statement. Applicants submit that those amendments sufficiently recite structure and functionality to suggest that a computer performs the recited claims. Applicants submit that the present claims satisfy 35 USC §101.

In the pending Office Action, all of the claims, including claims 22, 35, and 48, were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Peters (US 5,696,906). Applicants note that, under MPEP 2131, a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102 only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claim. In addition, the elements in the prior art reference must be arranged as required by the claim. MPEP 2131 (emphasis added). In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that each of the independent claims as presently amended are not anticipated by Peters.

In particular, Applicants note that each and every present claim includes the limitation that a provider of the plurality of telecommunications services is allowed to determine a format for customer billing statements relating to the plurality of communications services provided by the communications service provider, wherein the formatting is conducted in accordance with

the format. In other words, the format of the billing statement may be varied subject to the provider's preference. This limitation is neither taught nor suggested by Peters, particularly in as complete detail as is contained in the claims and in the arrangement required by the claim. To the contrary, at lines 38-39 of column 29, Peters states that "[t]he invention then prepares a bill for the subscriber on a standard format." (emphasis added). There is therefore no teaching, suggestion, or motivation in Peters to allow the format of the billing statement to be varied subject to the provider's preference as recited in the claims. Accordingly, the present claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Peters.

Applicant notes that the dependent claims include additional limitations not taught or suggested in the art of record, thus forming independent basis for novelty and non-obviousness.

To the extent that the amendments constitute a narrowing of the claims, such narrowing of the claims should not be construed as an admission as to the merits of the prior rejections. Indeed, Applicants traverse the rejections and preserve all rights and arguments.

Based on the foregoing, all pending claims are in a condition for entry and allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, entry of the present amendments, and an early notice of allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

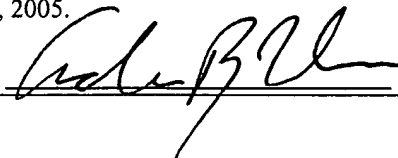


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